

IN RECOGNITION OF THE LIFE OF DENNIS KELLY AND THE DENNIS KELLY DIVISION OF THE ANCIENT ORDER OF THE HIBERNIANS

HON. PATRICK MEEHAN

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, July 22, 2014

Mr. MEEHAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the life of Dennis Kelly, who died 150 years ago yesterday, and the Dennis Kelly Division of the Ancient Order of the Hibernians.

In 1806 Dennis Kelly arrived from Ireland with his wife, Mary, and their daughter, Margaret, and settled in the Philadelphia area. Mr. Kelly entered the textile business and supplied cloth to the Army and Navy during the War of 1812, providing jobs to people in his local community. When Mr. Kelly died on July 21, 1864, he donated a part of his land for the establishment of St. Denis Church. Waves of immigrants from Ireland joined the parish and worked at Kelly's Cotton Mills.

The Ancient Order of Hibernians, Dennis Kelly Division is located in Havertown, Pennsylvania. Founded in 2001, this Irish Catholic fraternal organization remains dedicated to promoting and preserving Irish and Irish-American heritage. The Ancient Order of Hibernians promotes values such as friendship, unity and charity. Over the years the group has supported numerous philanthropic causes in Southeastern Pennsylvania.

Mr. Speaker, today's Havertown, locally known as Ireland's 33rd county, and the great Commonwealth of Pennsylvania owe a great debt to Mr. Dennis Kelly, one of Havertown's most influential immigrants on this, the 150th anniversary of his death.

THE RETIREMENT OF MASTER SERGEANT RODNEY T. ERICKSON FROM THE PENNSYLVANIA AIR NATIONAL GUARD

HON. LOU BARLETTA

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, July 22, 2014

Mr. BARLETTA. Mr. Speaker, I recognize Master Sergeant Rodney T. Erickson for 30 years of exemplary service in the Pennsylvania Air National Guard.

MSgt. Erickson joined the Air National Guard on July 20, 1984, and for the past 30 years has admirably served his community, the commonwealth of Pennsylvania, and the United States of America. Throughout his career, he has received countless medals and awards honoring him such as the Air Force achievement medal, the Meritorious Unit Award, the Air Force Outstanding Unit Award, the National Defense Service Medal. He has also been the recipient of numerous Pennsylvania awards including the Pennsylvania Commendation Medal, the Pennsylvania Governors Unit Citation, the Pennsylvania 20 Year Service Medal, and the Pennsylvania General Thomas J. Stewart Medal.

MSgt. Erickson began his career as a member of the Propulsion Section, during which he was deployed overseas for multiple operations including Desert Shield, Desert Storm, and

Operation Enduring Freedom. Upon his promotion to become a Master Sergeant and supervisor of the Propulsion Section, he masterfully guided the group through a transitional phase of changing aircraft while many members of the unit were being deployed. Despite the limited manpower, through his leadership and example, the transition was successful and a highly trained workforce was able to maintain unit efficiency. Joining MSgt. Erickson in celebrating his retirement is his wife Dorothy and his children.

Mr. Speaker, MSgt. Rodney T. Erickson has been described as representing the very best of our citizen soldiers. I congratulate him and his family on his retirement from the Pennsylvania Air National Guard and thank him for his service to the commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

OUR UNCONSCIONABLE NATIONAL DEBT

HON. MIKE COFFMAN

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, July 22, 2014

Mr. COFFMAN. Mr. Speaker, on January 20, 2009, the day President Obama took office, the national debt was \$10,626,877,048,913.08.

Today, it is \$17,599,556,606,441.85. We've added \$6,972,679,557,528.77 to our debt in 5 years. This is over \$6.9 trillion in debt our nation, our economy, and our children could have avoided with a balanced budget amendment.

NICHOLAS KRISTOF ON "RELIGIOUS FREEDOM IN PERIL"

HON. FRANK R. WOLF

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, July 22, 2014

Mr. WOLF. Mr. Speaker, I submit a July 9 column by Nicholas Kristof of The New York Times. I have appreciated Mr. Kristof's advocacy on human rights issues over the years, particularly regarding the genocide in Darfur and ongoing violence in Sudan over the last decade. In this recent column, "Religious Freedom in Peril," he cuts through the empty gestures that often surround discussions of religious freedom abroad, and points out that the Muslim world is tragically disproportionate in apostasy and blasphemy laws, limits on religious activities and other constraints on religious freedom.

Of course, religious freedom is at risk throughout the world, and Muslims themselves face dire religious persecution from Burma to China to India. But recent news, including the advance of Islamic extremists in Iraq and the ongoing case of alleged apostate Meriam Ibrahim in Sudan, reminds us that citizens of many countries with Muslim majorities still deserve far greater justice and equality under the law.

I urge all my colleagues to read Mr. Kristof's column and keep it in mind as they consider ongoing events in the world.

[From The New York Times, July 9, 2014]

RELIGIOUS FREEDOM IN PERIL

(By Nicholas Kristof)

A Sudanese court in May sentences a Christian woman married to an American to

be hanged, after first being lashed 100 times, after she refuses to renounce her Christian faith.

Muslim extremists in Iraq demand that Christians pay a tax or face crucifixion, according to the Iraqi government.

In Malaysia, courts ban some non-Muslims from using the word "Allah."

In country after country, Islamic fundamentalists are measuring their own religious devotion by the degree to which they suppress or assault those they see as heretics, creating a human rights catastrophe as people are punished or murdered for their religious beliefs.

This is a sensitive area I'm wading into here, I realize. Islam-haters in America and the West seize upon incidents like these to denounce Islam as a malignant religion of violence, while politically correct liberals are reluctant to say anything for fear of feeding bigotry. Yet there is a real issue here of religious tolerance, affecting millions of people, and we should be able to discuss it.

I've been thinking about this partly because of the recent murder of a friend, Rashid Rehman, a courageous human rights lawyer in Multan, Pakistan. Rashid, a Muslim, had agreed to defend a university lecturer who faced the death penalty after being falsely accused of insulting the Prophet Muhammad. This apparently made Rashid a target as well, for two men walked into his office and shot him dead.

No doubt the killers thought themselves pious Muslims. Yet such extremists do far more damage to the global reputation of Islam than all the world's Islamophobes put together.

The paradox is that Islam historically was relatively tolerant. In 628, Muhammad issued a document of protection to the monks of St. Catherine's Monastery.

"No compulsion is to be on them," he wrote. "If a female Christian is married to a Muslim, it is not to take place without her approval. She is not to be prevented from visiting her church to pray."

Anti-Semitism runs deep in some Muslim countries today, but, for most of history, Muslims were more tolerant of Jews than Christians were. As recently as the Dreyfus Affair in France more than a century ago, Muslims defended a Jew from the anti-Semitism of Christians.

Likewise, the most extreme modern case of religious persecution involved Europeans trying to exterminate Jews in the Holocaust. Since then, one of the worst religious massacres was the killing of Muslims by Christians at Srebrenica in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

It's also true that some of the bravest champions of religious freedom today are Muslim. Mohammad Ali Dadkhah, an Iranian lawyer, represented a Christian pastor pro bono, successfully defending him from charges of apostasy. But Dadkhah was then arrested himself and is now serving a nine-year prison sentence.

Saudi Arabia may feud with Iran about almost everything else, but they are twins in religious repression. Saudis ban churches; it insults Islam to suggest it is so frail it cannot withstand an occasional church.

Particularly insidious in conservative Muslim countries is the idea that anyone born Muslim cannot become a Christian. That's what happened in the case I mentioned in Sudan: The court considered the woman, Meriam Ibrahim, a Muslim even though she had been raised a Christian by her mother. The court sentenced her to die for apostasy; that was overturned, and she is now sheltering with her family in the United States Embassy in Sudan, trying to get permission to leave the country.

A Pew Research Center study found Muslims victims of religious repression in about